



George Washington & Jefferson National Forests
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June 19, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Forest Service Seeks Applicants for Resource Advisory Committee

Roanoke, Va. - The USDA Forest Service is seeking individuals to serve on a Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) for the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. RAC members will review and recommend projects that benefit national forest resources as part of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.

The Act states that counties may elect to receive payments tied to the amount of National Forest System lands (and other factors) residing in their county borders. Counties may designate a portion of the funds to projects benefiting National Forest System lands. Title II of the Act requires that a RAC is created to review and recommend projects for implementation. The current RAC has recommended over \$530,000 and 27 projects to the Forest Service, including the creation of an access park for the Cowpasture River, replacing culverts and repairing forest roads, and improving fish habitat at Douthat State Park.

The RAC is comprised of 15 members and three alternates who reside in Virginia and represent a wide array of interests. The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture appoints RAC members to a four-year term, and strives for diverse membership. Special attention is given to those who demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively with others of different viewpoints, display a dedication to serving the community's interests, and have active participation in current natural resource issues.

RAC members coordinate closely with the Forest Service and county officials to review and recommend proposed land management projects in participating counties, monitor the projects, and provide advice to the Forest Service. Committee members will review projects that improve the maintenance of existing infrastructure, implement stewardship objectives that enhance forest ecosystems, and restore and improve land, health, and water quality.

All projects recommended by the RAC must be approved by the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests Supervisor and are forwarded to the Secretary of Agriculture for final approval. Meetings are typically held two or three times per year at the Forest Supervisor's Office in Roanoke, Virginia.

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To be eligible, members must fall under one or more of the following three categories:

CATEGORY A – Five regular members and one replacement who represent one or more of the following interests:

- Organized Labor or Non-Timber Forest Product Harvester Groups
- Developed Outdoor Recreation, Off-Highway Vehicle Users, or Commercial Recreation Activities
- Energy and Mineral Development, or Commercial or Recreational Fishing Groups
- Commercial Timber Industry
- Federal Grazing Permit or Other Land Use Permit Holders, or Representative of Non-Industrial Private Forest Land Owners, Within the Area for which the Committee is Organized

CATEGORY B – Five regular members and one replacement who represent one or more of the following interests:

- Nationally Recognized Environmental Organizations
- Regionally or Locally Recognized Environmental Organizations
- Dispersed Recreational Activities
- Archaeology and History
- Nationally or Regionally Recognized Wild Horse and Burro Interest, Wildlife or Hunting Organizations, or Watershed Associations

CATEGORY C – Five regular members and one replacement who represent one or more of the following interests:

- Hold State-Elected Office
- Hold County or Local-Elected Office
- American Indian Tribes Within or Adjacent to the Area for which the Committee is Organized
- Area School Officials or Teachers
- Affected Public-At-Large

Questions regarding serving on the Virginia Resource Advisory Committee should be directed to Michael Williams at mrwilliams04@fs.fed.us or 540 265 5173. Applications for RAC membership, as well as a complete list of past year's projects are available online at www.fs.fed.us/r8/gwj/.

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